

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, December 7, 1890, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell Beinn Bhreagh, Victoria County, Cape Breton, N. S. Dec. 7th, 1890. My dear Mrs. Bell:

Many thanks for your letter received the other day. I should have thanked Mr. Bell for his book before. It came too late for my birthday and since then the weather has been so unsettled that we have not ventured to invite any one here. One day it will thaw and the next freeze, so we never know what to expect. One Monday Mr. McCurdy crossed in a boat in a fearful storm, a feat which no one had performed before, the next day boys were walking over the ice pounding it with a long stick as they went. The snow lay eighteen inches in drifts, yet Miss True and I went with Mr. McCurdy through the snow and through trackless woods, finding our way by blazed trees to the hut of a poor man who had appealed to us for aid. Our walk was five miles long and the wind was cold, but we were warmly wrapped up and enjoyed ourselves immensely except when he were in the fearful hovel, where five people live, no one knows how. Yesterday Daisy and I had our first skating lesson, and enjoyed it immensely. Mr. McCurdy is such a splendid strong teacher that he would never allow me to fall, try how I would. He is also a magnificent skater himself, it was beautiful to see him skim slowly over the ice around and around, first on one foot and then another. Alec proposes that I pad Daisy as he says you padded him when he first went skating.

We have decided to remain here over Christmas, as we think it better to do so on many accounts. First we cannot pass Philadelphia without seeing Elsie, and we are sure that it is far better for her not to see us 2 at this time. Again it would be very hard for her to know us all together in Washington while she was alone in Philadelphia. Then we are all so well here and Daisy is leading such a healthy happy outdoor life that we cannot bear to take

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her home and shut her up in the city. We feel also that by remaining over Christmas we can make the day a happy one to many poor people here to whom Christmas cheer has been unknown. We are going to have a Christmas tree for the children of our workmen, and try to make the day a pleasant one for them. We know all these people personally, which makes it a very different thing from dressing Christmas trees for utter strangers, which is the only way I could do anything of the kind for the poor in the city. Our present plan is to leave on the 26th or as soon after as may be, come home by way of Montreal stopping at New York and Philadelphia. Our house is very warm and comfortable, and we grow more fond of it every day. Alec is very happy with his sheep for whom he has erected a perfect little village. Please thank Mary and Louise for their pretty little rose book which I have enjoyed reading. It was very good in them to remember me.

Much love to them, Mr. Bell and yourself,

Affectionately yours, Mabel.